

STAFF STUDY

"The Feasibility of Commissioning  
Chaplains in the Grade of Captain  
Upon Entering Extended Active Duty."

Submitted by--

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Course: 16-A-C22, 63-1  
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319.1

SUBJECT: United States Army Chaplain Commission.

1. PROBLEM. To determine the feasibility of commissioning Chaplains in the grade of Captain upon entering extended active duty.
2. ASSUMPTIONS.
  - a. The initial appointment of Chaplains in the grade of Captain, commensurate with their professional competency, will contribute to the effective accomplishment of military missions.
  - b. Legislation on pay and allowances for the military establishment may be enacted to restore the traditional minimum military status of Chaplains to meet current contingencies.
3. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM.
  - a. A 129-year tradition established the minimum grade of Chaplains with the pay and allowances of a Captain of Cavalry and/or Infantry.
  - b. Regulations and Statutes were enacted from time to time to establish military discipline for Chaplains regarding grade.
  - c. Changes to Regulations and Statutes were enacted from time to time to improve military discipline for Chaplains regarding grade.
4. DISCUSSION.
  - a. Advantages in commissioning Chaplains in the grade of Captain upon entering extended active duty:
    - (1) The grade of Captain restores the traditional minimum military status of Chaplains.
    - (2) The grade of Captain gives the Chaplain a commensurate professional relationship to the soldier and a firmer status in military channels for helping him.
    - (3) The payment of Chaplains in accordance with their grade as Captain removes the discrimination and financial hardship which Chaplains, as professionally competent individuals, have long suffered.
  - b. Disadvantages in commissioning Chaplains in the grade of Captain upon entering extended active duty:
    - (1) AR 140-100, par 30a currently regulates the commissioning of Chaplains initially in the grade of first lieutenant.
    - (2) The current legislation is based on the unprecedented Act of 21 April 1904 which regulated the commissioning of Chaplains initially in the grade of first lieutenant.
  - c. For details see Annex A (Grade).
5. CONCLUSION. Chaplains should be commissioned in the traditional grade of Captain upon entering extended active duty.
6. ACTION RECOMMENDED. That the conclusion in paragraph 5 be approved.

*JH.*  
GUSMA  
Ch (Capt) USA  
Ext 211

ANNEX: A--Grade

CONCURRENCES.

*9/35* Gen Frank, C/S, Ext 111  
*9/35* Lt Gen Smith, DC/S, Ext 222  
*9/35* Ch (Maj Gen) Baker, C/Ch, Ext 333  
*9/35* Ch (Brig Gen) Jones, DC/Ch, Ext 444

NONCONCURRENCES. None

CONSIDERATION OF NONCONCURRENCES. N/A

ANNEXES ADDED: None

ACTION BY APPROVING AUTHORITY:

Approved (disapproved), including (excluding) exceptions as noted.

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Signature

## GRADE

Originally, Chaplains had no rank. During the Civil War the rank of "chaplain" was created. In 1901 the distinction between post and regimental chaplains was abolished, and in 1904 legislation made provision for various grades of chaplain from first lieutenant to major. In 1920 the permanent grade ceiling was raised to lieutenant colonel, in 1935 to colonel. In 1941 Congress made provision for the temporary appointment of chaplains in the grade of brigadier general, in 1944 major general. The Officer Personnel Act of 1947 authorized permanent general officer grades.

### Revolutionary Years

On 29 July 1775, the Continental Congress established the chaplaincy by including them in the pay scale of the army, with the pay of a captain, twenty dollars a month, and "forage for one horse." Because of this official recognition, 29 July is designated as the anniversary of the United States Army chaplaincy.

Clergymen, as well as surgeons, were contracted to serve for a period of either six months or one year. No actual commission in the Continental Army was issued to either. Chaplains assigned to brigade headquarters were given the simulated rank of major but had no actual rank apart from their ecclesiastical status. In May 1777 Congress ordered that only one chaplain be allowed to a brigade and that he should receive the pay and allowances of a colonel in the same corps. These chaplains were to be appointed by Congress on recommendation of brigade commanders, but only clergymen of experience and established public character, piety, virtue, and learning should be nominated.

The chaplains of the Revolution established a group of precedents which never have been lost. Their influence in the support of discipline and morale was so valuable that chaplains have been considered an essential part of the military organization in all emergencies. Serving without military rank, they gained a place in the confidence of officers and men which no commission could have conferred or maintained. When rank was conferred in later years, those who were true to the tradition of the office were accorded a deference out of proportion to their grade.

### Washington--Lincoln Years

In the first fifty years after the establishment of the United States Government the chaplaincy had a varied history in both the Army and Navy. Under the Act of 3 March 1791, the appointment of one chaplain for the Army was authorized in case the President might "deem the

appointment...essential to the public interest." The Rev. John Hurt of Virginia who had served as a chaplain in the Revolution was the first chaplain appointed under the new act.

As the value of the ration had become a variable item, an exact comparison cannot be made, but it is estimated that the chaplain received slightly more than the surgeon and from \$6 to \$9 more than the monthly pay of captains.

A law of 1792 placed the chaplain in the General Staff without changing his pay status, but in 1795 he was allowed two rations and forage, which were valued at \$6 a month. Chaplains were not mentioned in the succeeding military legislation until the Act of 16 July 1798 directed that 12 regiments of infantry and 1 of dragoons be raised and authorized the appointment of 4 chaplains with the pay and emoluments of a major.

In 1808, foreign perils brought a law which ordered the raising of eight additional regiments and the assignment of a chaplain to each brigade, with the pay and emoluments of a major of infantry. Early in 1812, with the country on the verge of war, Congress ordered 13 regiments to be raised at once. They were to be very large, numbering in the infantry more than 2,000 officers and men and nearly that many in the artillery. Nevertheless, only one chaplain was provided for each brigade. The next year 20 more regiments were authorized, and the same provision was made for chaplains. Some of the militia regiments called into the Federal service had their own chaplains, and Congress did not attempt to substitute the brigade chaplaincy of the national forces, but a law of 18 April 1814 gave these men only the pay and rations of a captain of infantry, with the addition of forage for one horse.

A law of 1815 which fixed the pay of officers at the same rates as in 1802 did not mention chaplains, but the Act of 24 April 1816 authorized one to each brigade, with the pay and emoluments of a major. It further authorized a monthly allowance of \$8 a horse when forage was not drawn in kind, but specified that neither money nor forage be given except for horses actually in use. Two years later the characteristic post-war spirit of economy led to the repeal of those parts of this law which concerned brigade chaplains, judge advocates, hospital surgeons, and mates. A further provision of the Act of 24 April 1816 directed that a chaplain be stationed at the Military Academy and serve as professor of geography, history, and ethics, with the same pay and emoluments as the professor of mathematics. The reorganization of the peace establishment in 1821 made no other provision for chaplains.

When the Mexican War broke out, several regiments were sent to the theater of operations without chaplains. Supporting a motion for their appointment to all regiments, Senator Hannegan declared that if chaplains had been provided for those which had gone into Mexico, the crimes and disorders of which so much had been heard would have been as 1 to 100, because no power on earth was so well calculated to maintain order, propriety, and decency in camp as the chaplains. He urged that they receive the pay and emoluments of a major of dragoons, which was said to amount to \$2,182.82 a year. Several felt this to be too much, but the senator pointed out that chaplains would not need horses, forage, or servants and would actually draw only about \$1,100. Webster proposed \$1,000, and this figure was accepted by the Senate. The House reduced the amount to \$500, but the conference committees recommended a compromise, and the Act of 11 February 1847 gave chaplains \$750, 1 ration, and forage for 1 horse.

After the war the Army reverted to the system of post chaplain, and a law of 2 March 1849 increased the authorized number from 20 to 30. Two sections of the Act of 3 March 1855 were of interest to chaplains. One stated that they should share in the extra pay authorized by a law of 28 September 1850 for the officers and men who served in California before 1 March 1852. This bonus for officers was at the rate of \$2 a day. The other specifically included them in a grant of 160 acres of land to every officer or man who had served honorably in any war since 1790.

### Civil War Years

The Civil War revival of religion, partly induced by the problems and issues of war, led to the chaplaincy being held in high regard. Both the North and the South had chaplains in their forces, revivals led by visiting clergymen, and prayer meetings led by officers and enlisted men.

Thirty post chaplains, several of them stationed in southern States, were all that were authorized by Federal law in the spring of 1861. Militia regiments which responded to the President's proclamation of 15 April were organized by State authority, and many had their own chaplains. Clearly neither system could meet the needs of the large army which it was apparent must be raised by the national government.

On 3 May, additional troops were called both to augment the Regular Army and for volunteer service. The following day the War Department issued General Orders Number 15 and 16, the former for the organization of the volunteer regiments, and the latter making similar provision for the new units of the Regular Army. Both orders authorized a regimental commander to appoint a chaplain on the vote of field officers and company commanders. Men so appointed must be regularly ordained Christian ministers, and they were to receive the pay and allowances of a captain of cavalry.

The Statutes of 22 July 1861 stated:

That there shall be allowed to each regiment one chaplain, who shall be appointed by the regimental commander....The chaplain so appointed must be a regular ordained minister of a Christian denomination, and shall receive the pay and allowances of a captain of cavalry...

An important law became effective on 9 April 1864. It recognized the "rank of chaplain without command" in the regular and volunteer service and made several provisions tending to place chaplains on the same footing as other officers. The quarterly report to the regimental commander required by the 1861 law was changed to a monthly report to the Adjutant General, and the chaplain's duties at funerals and Sabbath services were stated. The cryptic phrase "rank of chaplain" proved to be rather confusing. Some held that it implied a new grade between those of captain and major. To clarify this matter, the Adjutant General, on 31 October 1864, proposed that the law be amended so "that the chaplains' rank shall be, as it formerly was in reference to pay and allowances, assimilated to that of captain, and that their names shall appear on the rolls and returns next after those of the medical officers." Four months passed before Secretary Stanton submitted this suggestion to the President, and the war ended without action by Congress.

#### Grant--Pershing Years

Most volunteer chaplains were discharged during 1865, but some were still on duty in the following year. By the Act of 28 July 1866 rank, pay, and allowances as established in 1864 were continued, and chaplains were authorized the same transportation as other officers when ordered from one field of duty to another. Further enactments on 2 March 1867 directed that all chaplains be commissioned by the President and gave them the same status as other officers in relation to tenure, retirement, allowances, and pensions. The law contained a slightly cryptic reference to "the grade of chaplain, which is hereby established, to rank as captain of infantry." This punctuation and the fact that the "rank of chaplain" had been recognized in 1864 make this statement rather ambiguous, but it seems to have been intended only to specify that chaplains should rank with captains of infantry.

The Spanish-American War found the United States with a regular army little changed from that authorized in 1869. A law of 28 June 1898 gave them the pay and allowances of mounted captains. This was computed to equal \$2,000 a year.



Following the Spanish-American War legislation concerning chaplains began with the Act of 2 March 1899, which authorized 42 regiments in the combat arms. Two years later the office of post chaplain was abolished by the Act of 2 February 1901. Thirty regiments of infantry and 15 of cavalry were established by this law, and the President was authorized to appoint a chaplain to each of these and 12 to the Corps of Artillery with the rank, pay, and allowances of a captain of infantry.

A special interest attaches to the Act of 21 April 1904 because it established distinctions in grade and pay among chaplains as a continuing policy in time of peace. On 8 February, Senator Scott stated that chaplains had always been regarded as mounted officers but had not been paid as such. A bill he was supporting would give them this additional pay and would permit the promotion of about one-third of them to the grade of major after a long period of distinguished service. The House made important changes. A member stated that the provision for promotion, though less than had been authorized in the Navy, was enough to attract good men. It had been recommended by the churches of the country, and he considered this a proper concession to a demand from the best people.

As finally enacted, the law directed that chaplains to be appointed in the future should have the grade, pay and allowances of a mounted captain after serving for 7 years in the corresponding status of a first lieutenant. The President was authorized from time to time to promote to the grade of major a total never to exceed 15 of those chaplains who had served 10 years as captains and expected to remain on duty. It was specified that all should be addressed officially as "Chaplain" regardless of grade.

#### World War I to the Present

The great war was 32 months old when the United States entered the struggle in April 1917. The Act of 12 May 1917 continued the authority for the allotment of 1 chaplain to each regiment and for each 1,200 in the coast artillery. General Pershing recommended three chaplains for each regiment, emphasizing that "Men selected should be of the highest character with reputations well established as sensible, practical, active ministers or workers, accustomed to dealing with young men." These proposals were carried out by the Act of 25 May 1918.

By Special Regulation No 496, published by the War Department on 23 May 1918 the Chaplain School was established.



It provided among other considerations that Chaplain candidates were to receive the pay and allowances of privates, first class, but should be on a parity with commissioned students in all matters concerning the internal operation of the school. Candidates manifesting unfitness for the chaplaincy could be eliminated at any time on recommendation of the school commander. Others should be approved for appointment in the grade of first lieutenant on the successful completion of the course.

The following description of life in the school in June 1918 was furnished by a student at that time who calls himself Chaplain Blank:

"In the School we were taught to indicate our military status in the form "First Lieutenant and Chaplain" and to wear the silver bars like other lieutenants. We did not know that the removal of insignia of rank from chaplains' uniforms had been ordered already. The Commandant spoke of the matter being under discussion, telling an amusing incident under earlier regulations when a harrassed regimental commander mistook the cross on his shoulder for the star of a brigadier. I was assigned to a Regular division in this country. Apparently the order about chaplains' insignia was not published in that division, for my associates still were wearing their bars when I was discharged in February 1919."

This incident was the most dramatic in a debate which had continued for many years. The social barriers which have long existed between officers and enlisted men have been deemed necessary to discipline. Because of these practices, many have felt that chaplains should not have military rank lest it repel enlisted men who wished to consult them. Others believed that this impediment would be greatly reduced if the chaplain did not wear the insignia of his grade. On 30 March 1918, General Pershing cabled to the Secretary of War:

"Believe work of chaplains would be facilitated if they were not given military rank. I have personally held this view for a long time. Many of our principal ministers believe that their relations would be closer if they did not have military titles and did not wear insignia. They should be given assimilated rank and pay. The above view is held by Bishop Brent, Bishop McCormick, and many others whom I have consulted. Recommend that the matter be given consideration again. Bill now pending before Congress."

To carry out this recommendation, Special Regulations 42 and 41 were changed on 7 and 22 May, directing that chaplains wear the silver cross on shoulder loops and the sleeves of overcoats.

The change was opposed in the Chaplain School with such vigor that Chaplains Pruden, Fleming, and Fealy were relieved in the autumn of 1918 for "inciting the student body of chaplains to acts of insubordination in protesting against the removal of the insignia of rank from chaplains' uniform." General Shanks declared his belief that the change did much harm and no good. The first Chief of Chaplains shared this view and urged the restoration of these insignia, and on 19 March 1926 this was done.

Under the Act of 1926, chaplains were required to wear their insignia of rank, and for the first time in American history they were given the rank, pay, and allowances of their respective grades up to and including that of colonel. Further, they were to wear their distinctive insignia--Latin crosses for Catholic and Protestant, and tablets with the Star of David for Jewish--on their lapels. The importance of this legislation and its enactment was that it placed the chaplain on a firm status in the service.

Except for raising the permanent grade ceiling so that today the Chief of Chaplains has the rank of major general with a deputy having the rank of brigadier general, no new legislation has been enacted regarding rank for chaplains.

The initial appointment of chaplains in the grade of first lieutenant still prevails since the Act of 21 April 1904. This Act overlooked the 129-year tradition which established the minimum grade of Chaplains with the pay and allowances of a captain. This has always been the accepted norm. Until the question of initial appointment in the grade of captain is resolved, the deterrent forces of an adequate supply as well as qualified chaplains will be a burden.

The weight of historical evidence and special considerations that favor the good of the Army lead us to recommend that the traditional grade of captain be restored to the Chaplain upon entering extended active duty.